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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON THE ROADMAP

Summary

-- Lead story in all papers today, June 10, highlights the fourth anniversary of King Abdullah's accession to the throne of the Hashemite Kingdom. Other lead stories highlight continued confrontations between the Israelis and the Palestinians, as well as resistance attacks in Falujah in Iraq, killing three American soldiers. A number of inside pages in all papers are dedicated to preparations for the upcoming Jordanian parliamentary elections, scheduled for June 17.

Editorial Commentary

-- "A calculated resistance move"

Daily columnist Jamil Nimri writes on the back page of independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm (06/10): "The joint military operation at the checkpoint in Gaza sought to confirm the right to resistance, as Palestinian factions are finalizing their political confrontation with the government of Abu Mazen. Yet, this operation does not entail any political damage to the Palestinians, rather it indicates the Palestinian factions' understanding of the difference between a military action that would disastrously harm the Palestinians under the current circumstances and a military action that would simply confirm the legitimate option of resisting the occupation.. Paralleling the negotiating efforts with operations against civilians in Israel would be like someone who picks up a rock and throws it on his own foot, but striking against the soldiers of the occupation would be parallel to the negotiations and could then be linked to the principle of mutual truce once the Israelis agree to it.. The American intervention has reached a point that surprised even Sharon and the ruling regime in Israel. Appointing Condoleezza Rice to follow up on the Aqaba summit and the commitments of both parties means that the U.S. President has placed his own weight behind this issue. The situation cannot tolerate any mistakes on the Palestinian part. The latest military operation remains within the acceptable boundaries, while it sends the specific message of confirming the right of resistance as long as Israel's intransigence and brutality continue to exist."

-- "The Israeli war against the outcome of the Aqaba summit"

Center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (06/10) editorializes: "As soon as there were signs of a genuine breakthrough for peace following the Aqaba summit, the extremist right-wing forces in Israel started escalating its aggressive measures against the Palestinian people.. Whoever is observing the Israeli policies and measures after Israel's reserved acceptance of the roadmap would conclude without the shadow of a doubt that the Israeli government, which had unwillingly accepted the roadmap, is going to do everything in its power to abort the roadmap. Understanding these issues dictates that the Palestinian side, authority, government and opposition, must be quite alert to the need of pulling in Palestinian ranks, maintaining their unity and avoiding squabbles."

-- "Bush's modified image"

Columnist Osama Sharif writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (06/09): "In less than two months, the world saw two opposite faces for U.S. President George W. Bush: the first as a man of war and the second as a messenger of peace.. In a few weeks time, President Bush's image was modified to meet the needs of his presidential campaign managers. The important thing is to modify the image of the President before the eyes of the American

voter, so that his early achievements are not limited to waging wars and military confrontations."
-- "The roadmap and protecting the sacrifices of the Palestinian people"

Columnist Hussein Abu Rumman writes on the op-ed page of semi-official, influential Arabic daily Al-Rai (06/09): "The variety of analyses for the outcome of the Aqaba summit, and whether it would be successful in revitalizing the peace process between the Palestinians and the Israelis leading to the implementation of the roadmap, largely depends on the variety of expectations with regards to the honest intentions and the credibility of declared positions, particularly on the Israeli and American sides. Yet, analyzing the Aqaba summit must also be seen from the viewpoint of the potential that the Palestinian acceptance of the roadmap provides for rebuilding the strategy of the Palestinian struggle on the short run. This viewpoint stems from the general picture that resulted from militarizing the Palestinian Intifada, a process that had disastrous outcome not only for the Palestinian Authority, but also for the Palestinian society as a whole.. Militarizing the anti-occupation peaceful resistance and the suicide operations that targeted civilians in Israel have severely harmed the image of the peaceful Intifada, and have led to dubbing the Palestinian struggle with terrorism, despite acknowledging their right to resist the occupation with all means possible.. The Palestinians are required to take advantage of and benefit from the U.S. President's need to appear as a man of peace after occupying Iraq, and from the commitments that he repeatedly declared to help put an end to the occupation."
GNEHM